

1 What is claimed is:

2  
3 1. A method of monitoring the capacity of a valve regulated lead acid battery, comprising:

4 connecting at least one battery monitor to said valve regulated lead acid battery;

5 connecting said monitor to a centralized system through an industry standard data system  
6 that collects and transfers data from the field to a central office;

7 providing said centralized system with an alarm;

8 performing a short-term discharge test on said battery using said battery monitor; and

9 obtaining a predicted capacity using a neural network and fuzzy logic network in  
10 combination with a prediction algorithm;

11 wherein, said discharge test provides input parameters for said networks which in  
12 combination with said prediction algorithm calculate said predicted capacity, and wherein, said  
13 alarm is activated when said predicted capacity falls below eighty percent, when an individual cell  
14 voltage is reduced to 1.95 volts or less, or when a system failure occurs.

15 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said battery monitor consists of hardware for monitoring  
16 the voltages of each battery cell and currents that are flowing into and out of said battery.

17 3. A method as in claim 1, wherein said battery monitor contains a serial port enabling data to  
18 be downloaded onto a network, computer, or printer.

19 4. A method as in claim 3, further comprising a real time clock.

20 5. A method as in claim 4, wherein said real time clock is automatically verified and updated  
21 through said network.

22 6. A method as in claim 1, wherein said discharge test is a four hour discharge test.

1 7. A method as in claim 1, wherein said discharge test collects specific data parameters  
2 including the cell age, open circuit voltage, voltage after one hour of discharge, voltage after three  
3 hours of discharge, and voltage after four hours of discharge.

4 8. A method as in claim 7, wherein said parameters are used to derive three additional data  
5 points including the slope of the discharge curve, the delta between voltages at three and four hours,  
6 and the proximity to two volts of the four hour voltage.

7 9. A method as in claim 1, wherein said discharge test is performed on a repeated basis.

8 10. A method as in claim 1, wherein said neural network is trained for a specific battery type in  
9 a lab by determining the actual capacity of a battery, inputting said parameters with the actual  
10 capacity used as a target, and programming the set of coefficients yielded by said neural network  
11 into an EEPROM which is inserted in said battery monitor.

12 11. A method as in claim 10, wherein said actual capacity is determined by the following  
13 formula:

14 
$$(\text{time to discharge to } 1.75\text{V} \times 24 \text{ hour discharge rate}) / (24 \times 24\text{-hour discharge rate in}$$

15 amps).

16 12. A method as in claim 10, wherein said neural network is trained only once.

17 13. A method as in claim 1, wherein said fuzzy logic network comprises:

18 dividing total battery capacity into capacity spans of ten percent;

19 associating a voltage range with each of said ten percent spans, wherein said voltage range  
20 was previously determined from said 24-hour rate discharge lab tests;

21 determining within which of said capacity spans said voltage ranges fall by comparing each  
22 of said open, one, three, and four hour cell voltages with the known base lines for the specific  
23 battery type;

1 determining the strength value of the cell's voltage within a particular span;  
2 determining the capacity range with the most positive strength value;  
3 adjusting the range that is immediately above said capacity range with most positive strength  
4 value by adding the strength value of said range to the lowest capacity value of said range to yield  
5 the upper capacity limit;  
6 adjusting the range that is immediately below said capacity range with most positive  
7 strength value by subtracting the strength value of said range from the highest capacity value of  
8 said range to yield the lower capacity limit;  
9 wherein, said difference between said upper capacity limit and said lower capacity limit  
10 yields the fuzzy logic capacity range span.

11 14. A method as in claim 13, wherein said strength value is determined as follows:

12 calculating the average voltage for each capacity range using the maximum and minimum  
13 voltage values;

14 dividing the cell test voltage (open, one, three, or four hour) by said average voltage;

15 subtracting the quotient of previous step from one and taking the absolute value of the  
16 difference;

17 performing this calculation for each of said cell test voltages--open, one, three, and four  
18 hour;

19 adding the calculated values for each of said cell test voltages and dividing the sum by  
20 seventy; and

21 subtracting the quotient of the previous step from one;

22 wherein, the value of said strength value can be positive or negative.

23 15. The method of claim 1, wherein said neural network comprises:

1 inputting parameters including open, one-hour, three-hour, and four-hour cell voltages and  
2 the age of said battery;

3 obtaining three more data points from said parameters including slope of the discharge  
4 curve, the delta between voltages at three and four hours, and the proximity to two volts of the four  
5 hour voltage;

6 outputting a number between zero and one;

7 wherein, said neural network performs calculations as any standard neural network using the  
8 coefficients determined from said training of said network using lab data; and

9 wherein, the output of said neural network is multiplied by the span of the capacity range  
10 obtained from the fuzzy logic network and adding this product to said lower capacity limit in order  
11 to determine the final capacity prediction.

12 16. An apparatus for monitoring the capacity of a valve regulated lead acid battery, comprising:

13 at least one battery monitor connected to said valve regulated lead acid battery;

14 a centralized system connecting said battery monitor through an industry standard data  
15 system to a central office;

16 an alarm connected to said centralized system;

17 wherein, said battery monitor contains a neural network and a fuzzy logic network used in  
18 combination with a prediction algorithm; and

19 wherein, said battery monitor contains a means for acquiring all data needed for said  
20 prediction algorithm.

21 17. An apparatus as in claim 16, wherein said battery monitor consists of hardware for  
22 monitoring the voltages of each battery cell and currents that are flowing into and out of said  
23 battery.

1 18. An apparatus as in claim 16, wherein said battery monitor contains a serial port enabling  
2 data to be downloaded onto a network, computer, or printer.

3 19. An apparatus as in claim 18, further comprising a real time clock.

4 20. An apparatus as in claim 19, wherein said real time clock is automatically verified and  
5 updated through said network.

6 21. A method of monitoring the capacity of a valve regulated lead acid battery, comprising:  
7 connecting at least one battery monitor to said valve regulated lead acid battery;  
8 connecting said monitor to a centralized system through an industry standard data system  
9 that collects and transfers data from the field to a central office;  
10 providing said centralized system with an alarm;  
11 performing a short-term discharge test on said battery; and  
12 obtaining a predicted capacity using a neural network and fuzzy logic network in  
13 combination with a prediction algorithm;

14 wherein, said discharge test comprises a four hour discharge of said battery, performed at a  
15 discharge rate calculated from the amp-hour size of the battery and a 24-hour period, during which  
16 specific data parameters consisting of cell age, open circuit voltage, voltage after one hour of  
17 discharge, voltage after three hours of discharge, and voltage after four hours of discharge are  
18 logged and three additional parameters including three hour slope, the delta between the three and  
19 four hour voltages, and the proximity to two volts of the four hour voltage are determined; and

20 wherein said neural network is trained in a lab by determining the actual capacity of a  
21 battery using the following formula:

22 
$$(\text{time to discharge to } 1.75\text{V} \times 24 \text{ hour discharge rate}) / (24 \times 24\text{-hour discharge rate in}$$
  
23 amps),

1 inputting said parameters with the actual capacity used as a target, and programming the set  
2 of coefficients yielded by said neural network into an EEPROM which is inserted in said battery  
3 monitor; and

4 wherein, said fuzzy logic network comprises dividing total battery capacity into capacity  
5 spans of ten percent; associating a voltage range with each of said ten percent spans, wherein said  
6 voltage range was previously determined from said 24-hour rate discharge lab tests; determining  
7 within which of said capacity spans said voltage ranges fall by comparing each of said open, one,  
8 three, and four hour cell voltages with the known base lines for the specific battery type;  
9 determining the strength value of the cell's voltage within a particular span by the following steps:

10 calculating the average voltage for each capacity range using the maximum and  
11 minimum voltage values; dividing the cell test voltage (open, one, three, or four  
12 hour) by said average voltage; subtracting the quotient of previous step from one and  
13 taking the absolute value of said answer; performing this calculation for each of cell  
14 test voltages (open one, three, and four hour); adding the calculated values for each  
15 of said cells test voltages and dividing the sum by seventy; and subtracting the  
16 quotient of the previous step from one;

17 determining the capacity range with the most positive strength value; adjusting the range that is  
18 immediately above said capacity range with most positive strength value by adding the strength  
19 value of said range to the lowest capacity value of said range to yield the upper capacity limit; and  
20 adjusting the range that is immediately below said capacity range with most positive strength value  
21 by subtracting the strength value of said range from the highest capacity value of said range to  
22 yield the lower capacity limit; wherein, said difference between said upper capacity limit and said  
23 lower capacity limit yields the fuzzy logic capacity range span; and

wherein, said neural network comprises inputting parameters including open, one-hour, three-hour, and four-hour cell voltages and the age of said battery; obtaining three more data points from said parameters including slope of the discharge curve, the delta between voltages at three and four hours, and the proximity to two volts of the four hour voltage; and outputting a number between zero and one; wherein, said neural network performs calculations as any standard neural net using the coefficients determined from said training of said network using lab data; and wherein, the output of said neural network is multiplied by the span of the capacity range obtained from the fuzzy logic network and adding this product to said lower capacity limit in order to determine the final capacity prediction.